



**Cleobury Mortimer Food Bank
Annual Report
January 2023 - December 2023**

Introduction

Cleobury Food Bank was established in October 2019 to relieve food poverty and financial hardship in Cleobury Mortimer and the surrounding area.

The Food Bank was previously jointly managed by the Town Council, St. Mary's Church and St. Elizabeth's Church when it was first set up. During 2023 it was decided to apply for charitable status which was granted by the Charities Commission in September 2023.

There are 7 Trustees who now oversee the governance of the Food Bank, and 3 coordinators who manage the day to day activities.

Cleobury Food Bank is open one morning a week - on Fridays from 9.30 to 11.30am, and is situated in Cleobury Mortimer Market Hall.

Aims and Objectives

We achieve our aims and objectives, in particular but not exclusively by:

- ❖ The provision of emergency food, items, advice and support to individuals and families in financial need
- ❖ Contributing to and working with other charities and organisations
- ❖ Making referrals to other agencies/organisations as required
- ❖ The provision of a £5 voucher to be used for the purchase of fresh food (bread/fruit/vegetables/meat/fish) at nominated local shops

Performance in 2023

2023 saw another increase in the use of the foodbank:

| Year | Adult parcels | Child parcels | Total |
|------|---------------|---------------|-------|
| 2020 | 281 | 249 | 530 |
| 2021 | 647 | 397 | 1044 |
| 2022 | 988 | 620 | 1608 |
| 2023 | 1092 | 677 | 1769 |

There were 19 referrals from other organisations in 2023 - including the GP surgery, CoCo (Clebury Compassionate Community), Mental Health Team, Housing, CAB and other Food Banks.

In addition to these 19 referrals, Clebury Food Bank continues to also accept self referrals.

Financial Pressures of 2023

Cost of living crisis continued: While the overall financial picture wasn't as dire in 2023 as the previous year, many people still struggled to afford food, utilities and basic essentials – particularly in the first half of 2023.

On a positive note, data from the Office of National Statistics found that consumer price inflation, which indicates the inflationary pressures on various goods and services, declined over the course of 2023. In January 2023, the Consumer Price Index was 8.8 percent. In December 2023, the CPI had decreased to 4.2 percent. So while the prices of goods and services continued to increase, this data showed the price increases were smaller than in 2022.

Food costs kept rising: Food inflation, which had been a major driver of rising overall inflation since 2021, started to ease in the second half of 2023. After reaching a high of 19 percent in March, food inflation dropped to 7 percent by December 2023, according to ONS data.

Of course, any level of inflation means that prices are going up, just not as quickly. These rising food prices continue to put financial pressure on our clients, as they must spend a larger share of their money each week on food.



While the inflation rate for food slowed in 2023, food prices remained high. The overall price of food and non-alcoholic beverages rose by about 25 percent over the two-year period between January 2022 and December 2023, according to the ONS.

Energy costs still pinched: Although energy prices decreased over the course of 2023, many households continued to struggle to pay their bills. Gas prices fell by 26.5 percent and electricity prices fell by 13 percent, according to data from the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH).

However, the latest Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) found that around 4 in 10 adults (41 percent) who pay energy bills said it was very or somewhat difficult to afford them. The survey also revealed that 44 percent of adults in Great Britain were using less fuel, such as gas or electricity, in their homes because of the rising cost of living.

In Cleobury Mortimer, most households use heating oil to heat their homes. While its price dropped from 94 pence per litre in 2022 to 73 pence per litre in 2023, the cost of heating oil was higher than it has been for much of the last decade. According to ONS data, from 2014 to 2021 the price of heating oil fluctuated but remained between 35 pence and 55 pence per litre.



Donations

The Food Bank has local donation points in Cleobury and at Doddington Heights Park where the local community can leave their donations. These are collected every week by one of our volunteers. We receive weekly support from local businesses - Mawley Milk and Platters and Plates with donations of milk and potatoes. The Doddington Heights Park residents collect as a community and transport their donations to the Food Bank every week. Local resident Mr. Balmer regularly donates large quantities of food and goods to the Food Bank and we have local residents who regularly order from our Amazon wishlist. We also receive cash donations from local residents. We were very grateful this year to receive Harvest collections from local churches and scout groups and Nineveh Ridge Care Farm. We are incredibly grateful for all this support which ensures that the Food Bank can continue to support those in need in and around our community.



Feedback

The following is some of the feedback that we have received from our Food Bank users in the last year:

“Being a single mummy with 3 children, the Friday Food Bank has been my life saver. They’re all so kind and helpful. I’d like to say a huge thank you again from me and the kids - we can’t thank you enough.”

“Helps me a lot with all my kids' food and advice.”

“Absolutely a god-send.”

“Very helpful and kind. Good listeners and cheers everyone up.”

“So all the staff at the Food Bank are absolutely marvellous, wonderful and very helpful. Always understanding and patient. Thank goodness they are here - it is a good cause and helpful to everyone.”

“Friendly, warm, welcoming and always happy to help. Great support.”

Networking

Cleobury Food Bank has regular input with the Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance, other local Food Banks, and is a member of IFAN (Independent Food Aid Network).

The Food Bank also liaises with the local Schools, CoCo, local health services, Housing, Mental Health Teams, Shropshire Social Prescribing Team and Shropshire Council Welfare Support Team.

Finance

Prior to November 2023, the Food Bank finances had been managed and held by Cleobury Mortimer Town Council. Following our successful application to become an independent charity the funds held were transferred over to the Food Bank on 7.11.23

The Funds handed over were very healthy - this is mainly due to two large donations received in 2022/2023 totalling £20,000 - one from another Food Bank and one from a donor who wished to remain anonymous

Accounts from 7.11.23 to 31.12.23

Transferred from Town Council: 22,687.24

Income:

Donations Received: 860.00

Expenses:

Extra food purchased 180.26

Rental and room hire 470.00

Voucher reimbursement 610.00

Xmas gift cards children 200.00

Balance as of 31.12.23 22,086.98

Based on current projections we can ensure that the Food Bank has enough funds to remain viable for the next 2 years. Our rental costs will be increasing from April 1st 2024.